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BOLIVAR AND THE UNITED STATES

Among the numerous works that have been written during the past decade in commemoration of the centennials of declarations of independence by the Spanish-American republics, those dealing with the life and times of Simón Bolívar are the most remarkable.¹ In them the character and career of the Liberator are discussed with an amount of fullness unequalled by any of the earlier treatises. The aspects of his versatile genius, his psychology, his personal habits, his talents and achievements as soldier, statesman, author and political philosopher, his place among the great men of all time, are revealed to an extraordinary degree. So many are the angles of vision from which his share in the emancipation of Spanish America is viewed, that the student of the activities of this eminent son of the New World finds the task of investigation much facilitated.

¹ In addition to an extensive periodical literature, represented in particular by a series of articles in *Cuba Contemporanea*, the following monographs or compilations may be mentioned as typical: Hugo D. Barbagelata, *Bolívar y San Martín*. Ciro Bayo, *Exámen de Próceres Americanos (Los Libertadores)*. Rufino Blanco-Fombona (editor), *Biblioteca Ayacucho* (series); *Bolívar pintado por sí mismo*; *Cartas de Bolívar*; *Simón Bolívar: Discursos y Proclamas*; *Simón Bolívar, Libertador de la América del Sur, por los más grandes Escritores Americanos*. Diego Carbonell, *Psicopatología de Bolívar*. Margarette Daniels, *Makers of South America*. F. Francia, *Genealogía de la Familia del Libertador, Simón Bolívar*. Juan Estévan Guastavino, *San Martín y Simón Bolívar: Glorifobia y Cochranismo Póstumos*. "Cornelio Hispano" (Ismael López), *Diario de Bucaramanga*. J. T. M. Johnston, *World Patriots*. Lino Duarte Level, *Campañas de Bolívar*. F. Lozano y Lozano, *El Maestro [Simón Rodríguez] del Libertador*. Jules Mancini, *Bolívar et l'Emancipation des Colonies Espagnoles des Origines à 1815*. J. D. Monsalve, *El Ideal Político del Libertador, Simón Bolívar*. Carlos Pereyra, *Bolívar y Washington: un Paralelo Imposible*. F. Loraine Petre, *Simón Bolívar, "El Libertador": a Life of the Chief Leader in the Revolt against Spain in Venezuela, New Granada and Peru*. Manuel Segundo Sánchez, *Iconografía del Libertador*. F. G. Urrutia, *El Ideal Internacional de Bolívar*. Carlos A. Villanueva, *La Monarquía en América: Fernando VII y los Nuevos Estados; La Santa Alianza; Bolívar y el General San Martín; El Imperio de los Andes*. Pedro A. Zubieta, *Congresos de Panamá y Tacubaya: breves Datos para la Historia Diplomática de Colombia*.

Though most of the writers and compilers who have contributed to this revival of interest in Bolívar endeavor to appreciate him in the light of the age in which he lived, and to measure his service to posterity, without injecting into the past preconceptions and prejudices born of recent events, a few have seen fit to make him an instrument for the manifestation of their particular views and hobbies. Because of international issues arising in and around the Caribbean region, and because of the animosities kindled by the present war, they have tried to justify their personal dislike for the United States by assertions purporting to show that the Liberator himself entertained much the same sentiment toward this country. That they have no evidence to substantiate their opinions is no deterrent to their expression of them. Historians and psychologists, they appear to think, are bound to interpret—and misinterpret—the thought of a great man whenever he does not give it utterance in a manner to suit their prepossessions. Elucidations of this sort make theorizing easy and dogmatizing a delight. They render signal aid, also, to malignant propaganda against the United States in certain of the Spanish-American countries and in Spain itself. Much of what is asserted, indeed, is to all intents and purposes wilful distortion.

Had Bolívar been actually as critical, if not altogether as hostile, in his attitude toward the United States as these latter-day explainers are wont to portray him, his own writings or those of his chief contemporary biographer would have revealed it. While it is true that only a fraction of his literary remains has come down to us, it would be a miracle were only the portion that is lost to contain his disapproval of the sister republic to the northward. That many of the communications addressed to the Liberator were filled with charges and accusations reflecting upon the United States, is unquestionable; that, in certain cases at least, they were designed to influence him against it, may be admitted; but that they succeeded in doing so, or that he cherished any such feelings toward it, is impossible to show. On the contrary, both his own statements and those of the man who knew him best demonstrate that he admired this country,

its statesmen, its people, its ideas, and its institutions. He was neither jealous of it, nor was he afraid. To him the United States was no potential "Colossus of the North" prone to swallow its weaker neighbors down into the abysmal gullet of "manifest destiny". It was an example, rather, of what was worthy to be emulated, and of what was needful to be avoided.

In order to understand Bolívar's attitude and policy, one must remember that by birth, training, and temperament he was an aristocrat. Much as he detested Spanish rule, and effectively as he accomplished its overthrow, he realized, as few of his contemporaries did, that the break with the past must not be too abrupt. An earnest believer in the superiority of republics to monarchies as such, he knew that the Spanish Americans were wholly unfitted for self-government as Great Britain and the United States understood and practiced it. A republic like Haiti, where the president was an autocrat, appealed to him more than one in which the executive was subject to restrictions imposed by the direct representatives of the people holding their offices by election and for a brief tenure. Political institutions from which the monarchical element was altogether absent, which made democracy a reality, and rendered the principle of popular representation powerful in government to the extent of giving it actual control of public affairs, he did not think appropriate to the conditions prevailing in Spanish America. With the clarity of statesmanlike vision which distinguished him in peace and war, Bolívar perceived that whatever was good in and for the United States was not necessarily, or even probably, beneficial if applied to lands of wholly different origin, traditions, and circumstances.

Where, therefore, the Liberator seems to criticise the United States, he is in reality uttering a note of warning. Even when in exile, when the future looked darkest, his reproaches of the Americans for their failure to afford direct aid to their struggling brethren in the southern countries, are not those of anger but of disappointment. Throughout his career his feeling of respect and affection for the United States, and of veneration for the great leader in its war for independence, seldom faltered and

never failed. Toward the close of his life, also, when he beheld the grandiose political fabric that he had reared crumbling into the destruction that he had feared and even prophesied, his thought of a refuge was the land to the northward, whither he had often lifted up his eyes in hope and where he might find solace in despair.

What Bolívar's early impressions of the United States were, during the few months he spent there, from October, 1806, to January, 1807, can only be conjectured. He appears to have visited Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington before embarking at Charleston for La Guaira.² Viewing the scenes of the struggle for liberty, beholding everywhere about him evidences of contentment and prosperity under a republican system that contrasted so strongly with the conditions that he knew to exist at home, must have fortified the resolution he had made while in Europe, to free his unhappy land from the shackles of foreign rule, and must have served as an inspiration amid the storm and stress that enveloped his heroic figure in later life. The recollection indeed of what he beheld in those carefree days of his young manhood, what he had learned at first hand of the character and deeds of American soldiers and statesmen, of American ideas and institutions, enabled him to form a concept of the United States which repelled doubt and insinuation about its attitude toward its sister republics in the throes of revolution, and furnished him a beacon-light to guide his countrymen away from the rocks and shoals of immaturity and inexperience in statecraft. That no record of Bolívar's personal impressions of his visit seems to have survived is unfortunate. Had they been unfavorable, or of scant influence upon his mind and spirit, the proof would have been forthcoming in some of his later utterances. But the absence of adverse comment, and the repeated occasions on which he testified to his regard for the United States, demonstrate that his remembrance in the main was one of affection and gratitude.

So far as such testimony is available, it may be examined from several points of view. Of these the first is his estimate of

² Jules Mancini, *Bolívar et l'Emancipation des Colonies Espagnoles des Origines à 1815*, p. 158.

Washington. Men of his time, no less than writers of a subsequent age, naturally placed his achievements alongside of those of the American leader in the cause of independence. Some extolled him as the superior of the two. Daniel Florence O'Leary, for example, his devoted friend, aide-de-camp and biographer, writing to Bolívar, October 28, 1826, and alluding to the latter's disapproval of the unruly conduct of Páez and the rebellious uprisings at Quito and Guayaquil, declared: "the promoters of disorganization will be permanently routed; to the friends of order new courage will be imparted, and the name of your Excellency will never be heard confounded again with those of Washington, Kosciusko and many other ordinary men, who cannot be compared with your Excellency".³ Given the close personal relationship existing between him and the Liberator, sentiments of such intense admiration might properly be expected. They stand in quite a different category, at all events, from the effusions of a recent adulator of Bolívar, who appears to think that the virtues of the great Venezuelan can best be exalted by belittling Washington—especially since the performance affords him a chance to pay off a political grudge of his own against the United States.⁴ His opinions, certainly, are not those of the eminent Ecuadorian, Juan Montalvo, who couples "Washington and Bolívar, august personages, the glory of the New World, the honor of humankind, together with the most renowned of men of all peoples and all times".⁵ Still less are they representative of the Liberator's idea of the great American.

The earliest direct reference in Bolívar's printed correspondence to Washington appears in his letter from Port-au-Prince to Pétion, the president of the republican portion of Haiti, October 9, 1816, as follows:

Your Excellency is destined to cause the memory of the great Washington to be forgotten, by marking out for yourself the most illustrious

³ Rufino Blanco-Fombona, ed., Biblioteca Ayacucho: *Últimos Años de la Vida Pública de Bolívar—Memorias del General O'Leary—Tomo apéndice*, p. 96.

⁴ Carlos Pereyra, *Bolívar y Washington: un Paralelo Imposible*.

⁵ Blanco-Fombona, ed., *Simón Bolívar, Libertador de la América del Sur, por los más grandes Escritores Americanos*, p. 83.

of careers, the obstacles to which are superior to every resource. The hero of the North had merely the soldiers of the enemy to overcome, and his chief triumph was that of his ambition. Your Excellency has everything to overcome, enemies and friends, foreigners and citizens, the fathers of the country and even the virtues of their brethren.⁶

On the face of it the allusion to the "Father of his Country" seems not very complimentary. But it must be remembered that Bolívar was an exile at the time, and a suppliant for military aid from the mulatto potentate. A skilful diplomat, he knew how to flatter the susceptibilities of the man he was addressing. Moreover, the permanence of tenure enjoyed by Pétion, and the species of paternalism with which he ruled his people, accorded closely with the Liberator's own conception of presidential power in general. Given these aspects of the matter, the denigration of Washington is far more apparent than real.

When Bolívar was not subject to influences of this sort, his veneration for the memory of the American leader expressed itself in no measured terms. Much as he believed in the desirability of a life tenure for a president in the republics that he had created, he cherished no thought of applying it to himself. The rôle in which he gloried was that of liberator and mentor; not that of office-holder and ruler. In 1824, when accused of aiming at an assumption of royalty, he declared: "If my heart does not deceive me, I shall follow rather in the footsteps of Washington, and shall prefer a death like his to being monarch of all the earth".⁷ Two years later, protesting against his reelection as president of Colombia, he wrote to Santander:

The honorable lesson afforded me by the hero citizen, the father of the great American Republic, must not be useless to us. The people wished to choose him again to the chief magistracy; generously that virtuous general showed his fellow citizens the danger of keeping public power indefinitely in the hands of an individual. The hero was heard; the people were docile.⁸

⁶ Blanco-Fombona, ed., *Cartas de Bolívar (1799-1822)*, p. 169.

⁷ J. D. Monsalve, *El Ideal Político del Libertador, Simón Bolívar*, I. 494.

⁸ *Memorias del General O'Leary: Cartas del Libertador*, XXX. 191.

On another occasion, angered by assertions doubting the honesty of his purpose in retaining the presidency, he tendered his resignation forthwith. "Suspicious of tyrannical usurpation surround my head", he complained, "and trouble the hearts of Colombians. Jealous republicans do not know how to regard me except with secret terror, because history tells them that all my compeers have been ambitious. In vain the example of Washington would defend me".⁹

But the culmination of Bolívar's devotion to the memory of the great American is found in his letters of 1826 to Lafayette and George Washington Custis. Writing to the former, March 20, he said:

By the public press I have learned with inexplicable joy that you have had the goodness to honor me with a treasure from Mount Vernon—the portrait of Washington, some of his venerable reliques, and one of the monuments of his glory, which are to be presented me at your hands in the name of the brothers of the Great Citizen, the First-Born Son of the New World. No words can set forth all the value that this gift and its embodying considerations, so glorious for me, hold in my heart. The family of Washington honors me beyond my hopes, even those the most imaginative; for Washington presented by Lafayette is the crown of all human recompense. He was the noble protector of social reforms and you were the citizen hero, the athlete of liberty who with one hand served America and with the other, the old continent. Ah! what mortal would be worthy of the honors which you and Mount Vernon have seen fit to heap upon me.¹⁰

To the latter, May 25, he wrote:

Although the public press had informed me of the glorious gift with which the son of the great Washington had wished to honor me, till today I had not received either the sacred relique of the man of liberty or the flattering letter of his worthy descendant. Today I have touched with my hands this inestimable present. The image of the first benefactor of the continent of Columbus, presented by the hero citizen, General Lafayette, and offered by the noble scion of that im-

⁹ Blanco-Fombona, ed. Biblioteca Ayacucho: *Ultimos Años de la Vida Pública de Bolívar, etc.*, p. 164, note.

¹⁰ *Memorias del General O'Leary: Cartas del Libertador*, XXX. 187-188.

mortal family, was all that could reward the most enlightened merit of the first man in the universe. Shall I be worthy of so much glory? No; but I accept it with a joy and gratitude that will go down with the venerable reliques of the father of America to the most remote generations of my country. . . . ”.¹¹

For a consideration of Bolívar's general attitude toward the United States, a preliminary statement of the specific object at which he aimed in the creation of Columbia and its satellite republics, Peru and Bolivia, seems desirable. As described by Sr. Monsalve,¹² the ideal to which he “early devoted himself, and to which he dedicated his thought, will, and energies, was that of giving to the southern continent absolute independence of European control, and of founding a nation that should be at least as worthy of respect as the United States, with absolute sovereignty, institutions of its own, a republican form of government, powerful and capable of itself alone to maintain hegemony over all of Spanish America”. If such a nation were indeed to be as “worthy of respect as the United States”, the latter, as the first among the republics of America to become independent, would be a natural model upon which Bolívar would seek to pattern his political handiwork, so far as it might be adaptable for that purpose. Yet more than one of the recent Spanish-American writers have attempted to show—by implication at least—that the dislike of the Liberator for the northern neighbor was so pronounced that he was bound to refrain from utilizing it as an example. According to Sr. Carlos A. Villanueva, for instance: from 1813 to 1820 the United States “followed closely the struggle of the colonies, sending along here and there arms, words of encouragement, arousing not a few hopes, and also putting in claims for damages from peoples that had not begun to live. Hence that deep resentment that Bolívar, the one most wounded, felt toward it”.¹³ So too, Sr. Angel César Rivas, speaking of William Henry Harrison's

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 200-201. Cf. also Eliza Parke Custis to the Liberator, November 8, 1828. *Memorias del General O'Leary*, XII. 238-239.

¹² *Op. cit.*, I. 15.

¹³ *La Monarquía en América: Fernando VII y los nuevos Estados*, p. 153.

services as minister, remarks: "Proud as he felt of his country, who knows whether the forming of the concept he had of Bolívar was aggravated by a knowledge of the antipathy which at the time of his arrival in Colombia the Great Man entertained toward the United States".¹⁴ As a matter of fact, during neither of the periods in question, nor at any other time, is there the slightest evidence that the Liberator had any feelings of the sort, unless his utterances belie his real sentiments—a circumstance quite incredible.

Perhaps the nearest approach to genuine criticism of the United States, amounting in no case to either resentment or antipathy, is contained in three communications of Bolívar. In the first, addressed to William White, May 1, 1820, he said: "North America, pursuing its arithmetical round of business, will avail itself of the opportunity to gain the Floridas, our friendship and a great hold on commerce".¹⁵ Secondly, in a conversation held with Captain Thomas Malling, and reported by him to the British Admiralty, March 20, 1825, Bolívar is declared to have remarked:

Democracy has its charms for the people, and in theory it seems plausible to possess a free government that excludes all hereditary distinctions; but in this respect England serves us also as an example. How much more worthy of respect is the British nation, governed by its king, Lords and Commons, than that other one, inordinately proud of its equality, where very little can be done for the benefit of the state! I certainly doubt whether the present situation in the United States can be much prolonged.¹⁶

¹⁴ *Ensayos de Historia Política y Diplomática*, p. 208.

¹⁵ Blanco-Fombona, ed., *Cartas de Bolívar*, (1799-1822), p. 283.

¹⁶ Quoted by Gil Fortoul, *Historia Constitucional de Venezuela*, I. 456. Sr. Villanueva, commenting on this message, asserts that Malling submitted the text to Bolívar for his approval, and that in consequence Bolívar approved what was stated in it. *La Monarquía en América: El Imperio de los Andes*, p. 104. Sr. Gil Fortoul, however, regards it differently. "It is well known," he observes, "that he [Bolívar] was never a democrat in the American sense, but rather an aristocrat of the English type. . . . It is most likely that Bolívar, able diplomat as he always was, made use of that sailor [Malling] to sound the London Cabinet with the object of securing its sympathy and support in the matters that were to be discussed at Panamá, and for his projected expedition to Cuba and Porto Rico, which the United States opposed." *Loc. cit.*

The third instance is furnished in the *Liberator's* letter to Patrick Campbell, the British chargé d'affaires, at Bogotá, August 5, 1829. As quoted by Sr. Rivas,¹⁷ his reference to the United States is put in the form of a question: "And the United States which seem destined by Providence to plague America with miseries in the name of liberty?" But when the entire paragraph is given, quite a different meaning, as well as form, emerges. "Don't you think," asked Bolívar, alluding to the possibility of a monarchical régime in Spanish America, "that England would be jealous of the election of a Bourbon?" Then he proceeds to exclaim: "How it would be opposed by the new American states and the United States, which seem destined to plague America with miseries in the name of Liberty!"¹⁸ From the context, however, it is clear that, of the three supposed criticisms, the first is merely a passing appreciation of the territorial, political, and commercial progress of the United States, and the second illustrates Bolívar's aristocratic inclinations, his well-known liking for England, and his equally well-known fear lest an imitation of American ideas of equality might wreak havoc in Spanish America; whereas the exclamatory phrase in the third is applicable in its terms to all the American republics of the time. Of actual hostility, or even of a sentiment of aversion, toward the northern neighbor there is really not a trace.

Turning now to a consideration of the instances in which Bolívar spoke in praise of the United States as a model country, his address to the congress at Angostura, February 15, 1819, submitting the plan of a constitution, may be cited. By way of allusion to American influence upon the first Venezuelan constitution, he said:

In fact, the example of the United States, because of its wonderful prosperity, was too promising not to be emulated. Who can resist the victorious attraction of a full and absolute enjoyment of sovereignty, independence, and liberty? Who can resist the love that inspires an intelligent government; that combines at one and the same time private rights with general rights; that makes the common will the su-

¹⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 208.

¹⁸ Monsalve, *op. cit.*, II. 245.

preme law of the individual will? Who can resist the rule of a beneficent government that, with an able, active and powerful hand, ever and everywhere guides all its springs of action toward social perfection, which is the sole end of human institutions? . . . If we wish to consult monuments and models of legislation, Great Britain, France [and] North America offer them in admirable fashion.¹⁹

Five years later, after expressing a wish that the United States might have a stronger government, he added:

All Europe will become free when it imbibes the principles of America, and beholds the results of liberty in the prosperity of peoples. . . . In less than a hundred years the civilized world will be governed by philosophy, and kings will not exist. The people will know their power and the advantages of liberty.²⁰

In a similar vein, expatiating upon the disorders rampant in Spanish America in 1829, and upon the urgent need of more powerful agencies of political control, he exclaimed: "Who can cure a whole world? The United States are worse off, and yet are the strongest!"²¹ Writing, also, to Santander, in March, 1826, the *Liberator* declared: "The American Republic is today the example of the glory of liberty and of the happiness of virtue. So great, so sublime, a lesson teaches me what I ought to do. Colombia, on its part, will know how to follow nobly her elder sister".²²

How fully Bolívar acknowledged the specific influence exercised by the constitution of the United States on the formation of the earlier organic laws of the Spanish-American republics is manifest in his address to the congress at Angostura, already mentioned. Here he stated that:

Even if the Venezuelan constitution [of 1811] did derive its bases from the most perfect one, in correctness of principles and beneficent effects of application, it differed essentially from the American in one cardinal point, and that doubtless the most important. The congress

¹⁹ Blanco-Fombona, ed., *Biblioteca Ayacucho: Bolívar y la Emancipación de Sur América—Memorias del General O'Leary*, I, 597, 610.

²⁰ "Rasgo de Bolívar en campana." Quoted by Monsalve, I, 495.

²¹ *Memorias del General O'Leary: Cartas del Libertador*, XXXI, 521.

²² *Ibid.*, XXX, 192.

of Venezuela, like the American, shares some of the attributes of executive power. We, furthermore, subdivide this power, assigning it to a collective body [a triumvirate], subject accordingly to the disadvantage of making the existence of the [executive branch of the] government periodical, suspending it and dissolving it whenever its members separate. . . .

Though the faculties of the president of the United States are limited by excessive restrictions, he exercises by himself all the governmental functions that the constitution allows; and it is unquestionable that his administration must be more uniform, constant and genuinely appropriate than that of a power diffused among various individuals—a combination that cannot fail to be monstrous. The judicial power in Venezuela is similar to the American, indefinite in duration, temporary and not life-long; it enjoys all the independence that befits it. . . .

Like the Americans, we have divided the national representation into two chambers: that of representatives and the senate. If the senate, instead of being elective, were hereditary, it would be to my mind the foundation, the bond, the soul, of our republic.²³

In his message, also, of January, 1826, to the congress at Chuquisaca, accompanying his project for a constitution, he observed:

The [life] president of Bolivia partakes of the faculties of the American executive, but with restrictions favorable to the people. . . . I have taken for Bolivia the executive of the most democratic republic in the world. . . . In the government of the United States the practice has recently been adopted of appointing the first minister to succeed the president. Nothing is so desirable in a republic as this method: it has the advantage of placing at the head of the administration a citizen experienced in the management of public affairs. When he enters upon the exercise of his functions he goes prepared, and bears with him the aureole of popularity and consummate skill. I have availed myself of this idea and have established it as a law.

The president of the republic appoints the vice-president to administer the state and succeed him in office.²⁴

That the Liberator recognized how greatly the circumstances of the Spanish-American countries differed from those of the

²³ Blanco-Fombona, ed., *Biblioteca Ayacucho: Bolívar y la Emancipación de Sur América, etc.*, I. 596, 602.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, II. 527, 529.

United States, how undesirable, therefore, it was to carry the spirit of imitation too far, how needful to be cautious in adoption and careful in rejection, appears very often in his utterances. In his famous "Jamaica letters", for example, he wrote:

So long as our compatriots do not acquire the political talents and virtues that distinguish our brethren of the North, systems entirely popular, far from being advantageous to us, I fear greatly may come to be our ruin. Unhappily these qualities in the requisite degree seem very distant from us. . . . On the contrary, we are dominated by the vices contracted under the rule of a nation like the Spanish, which has excelled only in pride, ambition, vengeance and avarice.²⁵

As a South American I feel myself obliged to mention certain facts that concern the nature of our internal wars. . . . What free nation, ancient or modern, has not suffered from disunion? Has there been a history more turbulent than that of Athens; have there been factions bloodier than those of Rome, civil wars more violent than those of England, dissensions more perilous than those of the United States of North America? Our discords have their origin in two copious sources of public calamity: ignorance and weakness.²⁶

So, too, in his address to the congress at Angostura he said:

We must remember that our population is neither European nor North American, that it is a mixture of Africa and America rather than an emanation from Europe; for even Spain itself, because of its African blood, its institutions and its character, is hardly European. It is impossible to determine accurately to what human family we belong. . . . This dissimilarity brings with it an obligation of atonement of the greatest transcendence.²⁷

Ten years later, writing to Belford Wilson, he expressed his regret over the "misfortune that we cannot assure the happiness of Colombia with the laws and customs of the Americans. You

²⁵ September 6, 1815. *Ibid.*, I. 383. O'Leary declares that the opinions of Bolívar set forth in this letter were "those which governed his conduct till the last moment of his existence; and the concatenation of later events has shown how solid were the bases on which it rests." *Ibid.*, 370.

²⁶ September 28, 1815. Blanco-Fombona, ed., *Cartas de Bolívar*, p. 153-154.

²⁷ Blanco-Fombona, ed., Biblioteca Ayacucho: *Bolívar y la Emancipación de Sur América, etc.*, I. 598.

know that this is just as impossible as it would be to assimilate Spain to England, and even more so."²⁸

Of American institutions that were not adaptable to Spanish-American conditions, two were especially singled out by Bolívar. These were certain features of the military organization and, above all, the federal system. Both are dealt with in his memoir of December 15, 1812, addressed from Cartagena to the people of New Granada.²⁹ Referring to the disastrous situation in Venezuela responsible for the recent downfall of the republic, Bolívar said:

We had philosophers for leaders, philanthropy for legislation, dialectics for tactics and sophists for soldiers. . . . From this came the decided opposition to raising veteran troops, drilled, disciplined and capable of presenting themselves on the field of battle to defend liberty with success and glory. In perverse fashion, innumerable bodies of untrained militia were recruited which, in addition to exhausting the national treasure-chests in paying out salaries to the staff, destroyed agriculture by drawing the country-folk away from their homes, and rendered hateful a government that obliged them to take up arms and abandon their families.

Republics, said our statesmen, have no need of men paid to maintain liberty. All the citizens will be soldiers whenever the enemy attacks us. Greece, Rome, Venice, Genoa, Switzerland, Holland, and recently North America, conquered their adversaries without the help of mercenary troops, ever prone to uphold despotism and subjugate their fellow citizens.

With these unpolitical and erroneous maunderings they beguiled the simple-minded, but did not convince the men of foresight who well knew the immense difference that exists between the peoples, times and customs of those republics and our own. . . . As to the modern ones that have shaken off the yoke of their tyrants, it is a matter of common knowledge that they kept the requisite number of veterans which their security demanded, except North America which, being

²⁸ *Memorias del General O'Leary: Cartas del Libertador*, XXXI. 463.

²⁹ Its importance, as expressive of the views of Bolívar, and its effect upon those to whom it was directed, are thus attested by O'Leary: "This document reveals the political opinions that guided him throughout his public career." It was "read with great eagerness by all parties . . . and brought on a reaction favorable to the cause of independence." Blanco-Fombona, ed., *Biblioteca Ayacucho: Bolívar y la Emancipación de Sur América*, etc., I. 151, 160.

at peace with all the world and protected by the sea, has not felt the necessity in recent years of retaining the complement of veteran troops required for the defense of its frontiers and strongholds.

The consequences made the error in its calculation severely plain to Venezuela; for the militia that sallied forth to meet the enemy, ignorant even of the use of arms, and not habituated to discipline and obedience, were overwhelmed at the beginning of the last campaign . . . which produced general disheartenment among soldiers and officers; for it is a military axiom that only armies accustomed to war are capable of recovering from the first unlucky incidents in a campaign.³⁰

More elaborate still was the expression of Bolívar's disapproval of the federal system, in view of the injurious effects it had had, and was likely to have, on the nascent republics of Spanish America. He averred that:

What weakened the government of Venezuela [more than extravagance and the issue of paper money] was the federal form that it adopted, following the exaggerated maxims of the rights of man which, by authorizing it to govern itself, breaks up social relationships and plunges nations into anarchy. . . .

Every province governed itself independently; and, patterning itself upon them, every town pretended to a like power, relying upon practices of the sort and the theory that all men and all governments enjoy the prerogative of setting up at their pleasure the government that suits them.

The subdivision of the province of Caracas, projected, discussed and approved by the federal congress, awoke and stirred up a bitter rivalry on the part of the subordinate towns and localities against the capital, which, said the congressmen who wanted to rule in their own districts, was a tyrant over the cities and the leech of the state.

The federal system, though it may be the most perfect and most capable of assuring human happiness in society is, nevertheless, the most unsuited to the interests of our nascent states. Generally speaking, our fellow citizens are not yet fit to exercise their rights fully and freely, because they lack the political virtues that characterize the true republican—virtues that are not acquirable under absolute governments, where the rights and the duties of the citizen are unknown. . . .

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 152-154.

I am disposed to think that, unless we centralize our American governments, our enemies will obtain the most complete advantage; we shall be inevitably involved in the horrors of civil dissension and conquered ignominiously by that handful of bandits who infest our regions.³¹

A year later, replying to the governor of Barinas, a partisan of federalism, Bolívar observed:

You can see that only those nations that have a government alike centralized and energetic are powerful and respected. France and England dispose of the world today only because of the strength of their government. . . .

How can small peoples, poor and impotent, aspire to the sovereignty and uphold it? You will call to mind the sovereignties of the United States. But, to begin with, these sovereignties were not set up until a dozen years after the revolution when, the war having ended, that Confederation was recognized by its very oppressors and enemies; till then the conquerors themselves had been the rulers of the state, and at their command everything was supplied without question—armies, arms and treasure. Secondly, the provinces of the United States, however sovereign, are such only for the purposes of internal administration, political and judicial. The treasury, affairs of war, the foreign relations of all the sovereignties are wholly subject to the authority of the president of the States alone. No province, furthermore, is sovereign unless it possesses a population and an amount of wealth sufficient to inspire respect on its own account. Eight hundred thousand inhabitants is the least population of the weakest sovereignty in those States.³²

Renewing his attack upon the federal system as inapplicable to Spanish-American conditions, and reasserting his belief in the necessity for a centralization of public powers, in his "Jamaica letter" of September 6, 1815, the *Liberator* declared that "the American states require the care of paternal governments that heal the sores and wounds of despotism and war". "I do not approve the federal system among the popular and representative," he continued, "because it is too perfect, and demands

³¹ *Ibid.*, 154–156.

³² *Ibid.*, 222.

political virtues and talents very superior to ours."³³ In his message to the congress at Angostura he expressed like sentiments:

The more I admire the excellence of the federal constitution of Venezuela, the more am I convinced of the impossibility of its application to our state. And, in my way of thinking, it is marvellous that its model in North America gets along so prosperously and that it is not altogether upset at the sight of the first difficulty or danger. In spite of the fact that that people [the American] is a singular model of political virtues and moral enlightenment; even if liberty has been its cradle, if it has been nurtured in liberty and fed on pure liberty—I must say, nevertheless, that in many respects this people is unique in the history of humankind. It is a prodigy, I repeat, that a system so feeble and complicated as the federal has been able to rule it under circumstances so difficult and delicate as those in the past.

But, whatever the government of the American nation, I must say that never, even remotely, did it enter my head to assimilate the situation and nature of two states so distinct as the English-American and Spanish-American. Would it not be very difficult to apply to Spain the code of political, civil and religious liberty of England? Well, it is more difficult still to adopt in Venezuela the laws of North America.

Does not the *Spirit of the Laws* say that these must be appropriate to the people who are in process of formation? . . . Here is the code that we ought to consult, and not that of Washington!

The first congress, in its federal constitution, hearkened more to the spirit of the provinces than to the solid idea of establishing an indivisible and centralized republic. Here our legislators yielded to the inconsiderate pressure of those provincials who were obfuscated by the dazzling brilliance of the happiness of the American people, fancying that the blessings it enjoys are due wholly to the form of government, and not to the character and customs of the citizens.

However promising this magnificent federal system [i.e., of the United States] may seem and may in fact be, the Venezuelans could not enjoy it all of a sudden when released from their chains. We were not prepared for so much welfare. . . . Our moral constitution did not yet have the consistency needful to enjoy the benefit of a gov-

³³ *Ibid.*, 384, 386.

ernment completely representative, and so sublime as to be suitable for a republic of saints.³⁴

All that happened during the ten years that followed simply confirmed Bolívar's convictions on this point. Writing to O'Leary, September 13, 1829, he said:

I have less inclination than ever to deal with federal government; such a social form is regularized anarchy, or rather it is a law that prescribes implicitly the obligation of socially dissolving and ruining the state with all its individuals at once. To my mind it would be better for [Spanish] America to adopt the Koran than the government of the United States, although it is the best in the world.³⁵

Examining now Bolívar's interest in the Congress of Panamá and his attitude toward the United States in that connection, it is well to call attention at the outset to the disposition of several Spanish-American writers in recent times to assert or imply that the Liberator was altogether opposed to the idea of having the northern republic represented at the gathering, that he summoned the Congress as a means of creating a counterpoise against potential peril from that quarter, and that he held this country responsible somehow for its failure. To explain why Bolívar sent out his circular of December 7, 1824, to the Spanish-American republics, Sr. Monsalve,³⁶ for example, states that, after the victories at Junin and Ayacucho, the views of Bolívar were aimed at strengthening Colombia and safeguarding it against later conquest. Now was the time to put into practice the idea cherished in 1815,³⁷ which in 1818 he would have wished to see realized: that of forming Spanish America into a confederation that could protect the federated nationalities against aggression, "European or racial", defend itself from the old continent and counterbalance the probable ambitions of the United States. Sr. Rivas³⁸ declares, similarly, that

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 595-597.

³⁵ Blanco-Fombona, ed., Biblioteca Ayacucho: *Ultimos Años de la Vida Pública de Bolívar, etc.*, pp. 576-577.

³⁶ *Op. cit.*, II. 173.

³⁷ Set forth in the "Jamaica letter" of September 6.

³⁸ *Op. cit.*, 173.

the government of Colombia could not forget that it was due chiefly to the formal interposition of the United States, which already had its designs on Cuba,³⁹ that it [Colombia] saw itself prevented from sending to this island and Porto Rico the army which had assured at Ayacucho the liberty of America. Neither could it forget that the failure of the Congress of Panamá, the supreme dream of Bolívar, proceeded in great measure from the opposition which the principles that this body was to formulate encountered in the North American Houses [of Congress] and Cabinet.

So, also, Sr. Gil Fortoul,⁴⁰ alluding to the failure of the Congress, remarks:

Thus was frustrated the double thought of Bolívar: to save from the domination of Spain—and of the United States—the islands of Cuba and Porto Rico, and to establish a permanent equilibrium between the great republic of English origin and the republics of Spanish origin. Which perhaps would have rendered the hegemony or protectorate of the former over the latter impossible.

Sr. Pereyra,⁴¹ on his part, alluding to the action of Santander, observes

In the ups and downs of the events of those tempestuous days a noisy, narrow ignoramus took upon himself the task of nullifying the grandiose thought of the genius [Bolívar] and, as vice-president of Colombia charged with the government in the absence of Bolívar, invited the United States and Brazil to participate in the Congress of Panamá. This Congress of Panamá absorbed the attention of Bolívar for several years, and when dispatching the memorable circular for its summons, his original idea had already degenerated; no longer was it a Spanish-American league with the object of confederation, but a congress of all the states of America, when Brazil and the United States—alien bodies on which Bolívar on principle had not wished to reckon—entered into the convocation.

The mediocre Santander not only spoiled the political idea, but planted the seed of that piece of pretentious foolishness called “Pan

³⁹ For a complete refutation of this assertion, see Raúl de Cárdenas, “Cuba no puede invocarse en testimonio del imperialismo norteamericano,” in *Cuba Contemporanea*, XIV. 246-290.

⁴⁰ *Op. cit.*, I. 386.

⁴¹ *Op. cit.*, 156, 158.

Americanism", utilized by the United States for the designs of its national policy at the expense of the Spanish-American republics.

In the mind of Bolívar, indeed, there never existed the absurd idea of a continental union. What he desired was solely the union of the republics that had become independent of Spain; and accordingly Brazil and the United States lay outside of it, just as Canada has remained excluded from the farces called "Pan-American Congresses."

Though not agreeing altogether with Sr. Pereyra's interpretation of Bolívar's concept of an assemblage of the nations on the Isthmus, Sr. Blanco-Fombona is at one with him in the estimate of Santander's behavior and its unfortunate consequences. In his opinion, "Bolívar did not wish to have the United States take part in the Congress".⁴² The idea of the Liberator in 1815, he declares, of an "august congress of representatives of the republics, kingdoms and empires", met to "treat and discuss the high interests of peace and war", should not be confounded with his later idea, according to which an international congress made up exclusively of Spanish-American countries should meet.

Santander balked this idea by undertaking on his own responsibility, as vice-president of Colombia, to invite the United States and European nations to the Congress of Panamá. The consequence was that Yankees came in . . . to give us advice and to mix themselves up with the problems of our America.

The lack of foresight displayed by Francisco de P. Santander opened the door to them. That selfsame Panamá was to become, in the course of time, a witness of the Punic faith of the United States, on the one hand, and of the final result of Santander's policy, on the other.⁴³

Apparently, also, for the purpose of demonstrating that Bolívar hoped that out of the Congress of Panamá would arise an international counterpoise to the United States, Sr. Blanco-Fombona, in his edition of the "Narración", in the *Memorias del General*

⁴² *La Evolución Política y Social de Hispano América*, p. 88, note.

⁴³ Biblioteca Ayacucho: *Bolívar y la Emancipación de Sur América*, etc., II. 614, note.

O'Leary,⁴⁴ prefixes a rather misleading title to the portion of the work dealing with a scheme of confederating the republics. This plan was suggested by the report brought from Panamá by one of the Peruvian delegates to the Congress, about the menace of an attack from Spain aided by France, the design of the Holy Alliance to subject the former colonies once more to Spanish rule, and the desire of Great Britain to see modifications made in the democratic bases on which the new nations rested. The title in question reads: "Project of confederating the new states or creation of a great republic, that would defend itself from Europe, serve as a counterpoise to Brazil and the United States, and become a make-weight in the political decisions of the world".⁴⁵ But in point of fact the sole reference in the portion of the text concerned to the United States discloses not the slightest indication that the Liberator wanted the Congress of Panamá to set up a counterpoise to this country. What it reveals, instead, is his fear lest the internal weakness of Colombia, and the probability of a similar condition in Peru, might bring disaster, and his insistence upon the need of taking local precautions against it. Clearly nothing more can be read into it than a reassertion of the Liberator's dread of internal collapse due; partly to an unwise imitation of the loose American federal system, and partly to the dissensions and disturbances seemingly inherent in the countries affected. Writing to La Fuente, Bolívar said:

The sole remedy that we can apply to so tremendous an evil is a general federation of Bolivia, Peru and Colombia, closer than that of the United States, controlled by a president and a vice-president, and governed by the Bolivian constitution, which could serve for the individual states and for the federation in general, making such changes as might appear advisable.⁴⁶

By way of counteracting these misinterpretations of what the Liberator thought about the Congress of Panamá, and the relation to it of the United States, the judgment of another

⁴⁴ Biblioteca Ayacucho: *Bolívar y la Emancipación de Sur América*.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, II. 582.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 584.

recent Spanish-American writer, who has made a close study of that body, may be cited. According to Sr. Pedro A. Zubieta:

Colombia believed, and rightly, that the participation, even if indirect, of these two powers [Great Britain and the United States] would contribute more seriousness to the labors of the assemblage, while it would serve to fix the real concept that ought to be formed, regarding the object which so august a corporation proposed to realize, overcoming in this fashion the bad effect of unfavorable accounts of it, circulated with zeal in the old continent by governments that could not view with friendly eyes the definitive establishment of the American democracies.⁴⁷

Stronger testimony still is afforded by the statements of actual contemporaries. O'Leary, for example, declares that the government of Colombia ordered Salazar, the minister in Washington,

to sound the intentions of that government regarding the great assembly and, in case it were favorably disposed, formally to invite it to send plenipotentiaries to Panamá, who, in union with those from Colombia and its allies, should concert efficacious means of resistance to all foreign colonization on the American continent and to the application of legitimist principles to the American states in general.⁴⁸

Again, after alluding to the fact that the United States in accepting the invitation made it known that it would observe strict neutrality between the belligerent parties, he says:

At length the assent was secured of the different nations of North and South America for a realization of the hopes that since 1815 Bolívar had conceived of seeing installed an august congress of the representatives of the republics, kingdoms and empires to treat and discuss the high interests of peace and war with the nations of the other parts of the earth.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ *Congresos de Panamá y Tacubaya: breves Datos para la Historia Diplomática de Colombia*, p. 36.

⁴⁸ Blanco-Fombona, ed., *Biblioteca Ayacucho: Bolívar y la Emancipación de Sur América*, etc., II. 621.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 626.

No bogey of Yankee domination thus was conjured up in the mind of O'Leary. Neither was it in Bolívar's.

In a letter to Santander, March 11, 1825, speaking of several elements needful for the salvation of Spanish America, the Liberator observed:

Furthermore, I insist upon the Congress of the Isthmus of all the American states, which is the fifth element. . . .

The palliating remedy for all this [*i.e.*, the threatening European situation at the time], if it meets, is the great congress of plenipotentiaries on the Isthmus in accordance with a vigorous, close and extensive plan of action, with an army at its command of a hundred thousand men at least, maintained by the confederation and independent of the constituent parts.

In addition to the other trifles of a fine-spun policy on the European order, a federal marine and an intimate and extremely close alliance with England and North America.⁵⁰

That he did not disapprove of the invitation given the United States, but only of its premature publicity, is evident in his statement to Héres, July 9:

I believe that the government of Colombia may get into trouble by publishing the invitation made to the United States without ascertaining beforehand its result. Political business is infinitely delicate; moreover, England is likely to regard such an invitation with unfriendly eyes. . . . Kindly tell the president [Santander] of my satisfaction with his entire administration.⁵¹

A similar attitude appears in another communication to Santander, October 10. With reference to the fact that on leaving Peru for Bolivia he had relinquished control over foreign affairs, he remarked: "Knowing that nothing is permissible for me to say in regard to Colombia, and recently in view of the fact that we are to be united federally in Panamá, our decisions in war, above all, must be federal."⁵² Writing to Briceño, February 27, 1826, moreover, he said:

⁵⁰ *Memorias del General O'Leary: Cartas del Libertador*, XXX. 49, 53.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 83, 84.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 134.

I am very anxious to see the General Assembly of the Isthmus installed. Besides being a step eminently politic and interesting, it is a step that we are bound to take as soon as possible, since Europe has its eyes fixed on the Isthmus and waits with impatient curiosity to see what the object of our alliance is.⁵³

Only after the Congress had been transferred from Panamá to Tacubaya, and evidence was at hand to show that it had been substantially a failure, so far as its main purposes were concerned, did Bolívar express himself disappointed. To Briceño he wrote: "The transference of the assembly to Mexico is going to put it under the immediate influence of that power, already too preponderant, and also under that of the United States of the North".⁵⁴ If he feared peril from any part of North America at the time, apparently it was not a "Yankee Colossus" that he dreaded. Later, in a letter to Páez, he thus records his feelings: "The Congress of Panamá, an institution that ought to be admirable if it had more efficacy, is nothing other than that crazy Greek who pretended to direct from a rock the ships that sailed. Its power will be a shadow, and its decrees mere counsellings—nothing more".⁵⁵

But if the Liberator's "table-talk", taken down by Luís Perú de Lacroix, is at all a trustworthy index to what Bolívar thought of the Congress in 1828, it throws a most extraordinary light on the whole affair. Whatever may be said of its credibility, the utter absence of any allusions to the United States is significant. Had the Liberator entertained in reality any such notions about this country and its supposedly evil relation to the Congress as have been ascribed to him by his misinterpreters of later days, they surely would have appeared in the intimate conversations of the "Diario de Bucaramanga". According to Perú de Lacroix, Bolívar remarked on May 25:

Some have said, and others still believe . . . that that meeting of American plenipotentiaries is a ridiculous imitation of the Congress

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 176-177.

⁵⁴ Blanco-Fombona, ed., *Biblioteca Ayacucho: Bolívar y la Emancipación de Sur América*, etc., II. 643.

⁵⁵ August 8, 1826. *Memorias del General O'Leary: Cartas del Libertador*, XXX. 256.

of Vienna which brought forth the Holy Alliance of Europe. Those who believe it are mistaken, and none more so than the Abbé de Pradt, with the fine things that he said about that Congress,⁵⁶ and proved that he does not know America and its true social and political condition. When I initiated that Congress, for the assembling of which I worked so hard, it was only fanfaronade that I knew would not be successful; but I judged it diplomatic and necessary in order that Colombia might be talked about, that all America might be shown to the world united in a single policy, a common interest and a powerful confederation. I repeat, it was fanfaronade, like my famous declaration of the year 1818, published at Angostura, November 20, 1820, in which I not only declared the independence of Venezuela, but defied Spain, Europe and the world. . . . With the Congress of Panama I wanted to make a noise, to make the name of Colombia and that of the other American republics resound, to discourage Spain, to hasten the recognition [of independence] it should have made, and that, also, of the remaining powers of Europe; but never did I imagine that there might come from it an American alliance like that set up by the Congress of Vienna. Mexico, Chile and La Plata cannot help Colombia, nor Colombia them, all their interests are diverse, except that of independence; only diplomatic relations can subsist among them, but no close relationship, except in appearance.⁵⁷

Mention has already been made of Bolívar's desire for an alliance with the United States as well as England. Time and again in his printed correspondence he expressed a wish for its aid, confided in its protection, sought its mediation and valued its opinion of him. In the "Jamaica letters" he wrote:

We hoped with good reason that all the civilized nations would hasten to our help so that we might attain a welfare, the advantages of which are reciprocal to both hemispheres. And yet, what disappointed hopes! Not only the Europeans, but even our brothers of the North, have remained passive spectators in this combat.⁵⁸

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We are abandoned by the whole world. No foreign nation has guided us with its wisdom and experience, or defended us with its arms,

⁵⁶ Cf. *Memorias del General O'Leary*, XII. 186-187, 194-233.

⁵⁷ "Cornelio Hispano" (Ismael López) ed., *Diario de Bucaramanga*, pp. 142-144.

⁵⁸ September 6, 1815. Blanco-Fombona ed., Biblioteca Ayacucho: *Bolívar y la Emancipación de Sur América*, etc., I. 376.

or protected us with its resources. This did not happen in North America during its struggle for emancipation, although it had every kind of advantage over us; the three most powerful European nations, owners of colonies, aided it to gain its independence, and Great Britain has not resorted to reprisals against that very Spain which made war on it to deprive it of its colonies. . . .

The United States of the North, which through its commerce could have furnished elements of war, deprived us of them on account of its contest with Great Britain. Except for this, Venezuela alone would have triumphed, and South America would not have been desolated by Spanish cruelty or destroyed by revolutionary anarchy.⁵⁹

Nine years later, in a letter to Olañeta, a Spanish general, he observed:

Perhaps you will not wish to believe me because you consider me an enemy; but what I am about to say is evident, well known and, so to speak, glaring in the eyes of all. Except for a part of Peru, the rest of the New World is ready for independence. England and the United States protect us.⁶⁰

To Santander, March 11, 1825, he declared:

I believe that [Spanish] America can be saved with these four elements—first, a large army to overawe the enemy and defend us; second, a European policy to ward off the first blows; third, with England; fourth, with the United States. . . .

Puerto Cabello must be defended at all cost . . . while the English and Americans are favorable to us and will protect our convoys by sea in any event.⁶¹

During the troublous days of 1829, while the Liberator was still struggling manfully to avert the utter collapse of his political structure, he protested to Urdaneta:

I want peace at all hazards, but our enemies make us desperate with their cruel obstinacy.

⁵⁹ September 28, 1815. Blanco-Fombona, ed., *Cartas de Bolívar*, pp. 154, 155.

⁶⁰ Blanco-Fombona, ed., Biblioteca Ayacucho: *Bolívar y la Emancipación de Sur América*, etc., II. 319.

⁶¹ *Memorias del General O'Leary: Cartas del Libertador*, XXX. 48, 49.

The government of Bolivia declared itself in favor of an alliance with Peru, which was natural to be supposed, and they even threaten us with Chile. I laugh at all the efforts of this crew when they can do nothing for themselves.

Buenos Aires has had several revolutions and the command has passed to other hands.

Bolivia has had three presidents in five days, killing two of them. Chile is in very inept and vacillating hands.

Mexico has caused the greatest scandal and has committed the worst crimes.

Guatemala adds to its difficulties.

All this makes me believe that this world of anarchy needs a foreign intervention that may serve to mediate in our differences and madnnesses. Oh, that the United States would only do something with Peru, which has chosen it in mockery as a guarantor!⁶²

All that the Peruvians do favors our cause, for the world will know how great is the justice of it, and how infamous, the Peruvian government. What is more, the United States, as guarantor of the treaty of Girón, cannot help feeling indignant at the violators of it and taking our side. The present president of that country (General Jackson) is very well disposed to me.⁶³

In the same strain he wrote to Montilla:

It appears that the North American government is thoroughly earnest in its service as mediator between ourselves and the Peruvians; accordingly one may feel assured that all the crimes [murder, pillage and arson] that I have just mentioned will strongly incline it to recognize the force of our contentions, and will have much weight in the balance of justice and policy.⁶⁴

To Vergara he said:

Above all, I am infinitely pleased with what the American government has done in trying to adjust our affairs with Peru. Avail yourself of this opportunity to impress upon it the horrors committed by our

⁶² *Ibid.*, XXXI. 341.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 345, 346.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 350, 351.

enemies, so that it may adopt measures of conciliation capable of putting an end to our disagreements.⁶⁵

I agree with you . . . about the mediation of the United States. I have acted and shall act with the greatest dignity, and more still with the Americans.⁶⁶

How greatly Bolívar valued the good opinion of the United States during this fateful year of 1829 preceding his untimely death, is evident in his messages to his faithful friends and confidants, O'Leary and Belford Wilson. To the former he wrote:

It seems to me that I behold all hell breaking loose in abominations against me. My only consolation is the hope that you and Wilson will confront it and defend me.

In order to reconcile this defense with the interests of Colombia, I have appointed you minister to the United States, where my enemies will certainly try their best to tear me to bits, and where I most need some one to defend me.⁶⁷

To the latter he made known his desire to seek refuge from all his toils and troubles in the land of Washington, his fellow liberator:

My authority is to end in the first days of the coming year, when the Constituent Congress meets, into whose hands I am going to relinquish the supreme command, resolved as I am never again to assume it.

And as this is my final resolve, probably your letter will be received in the United States shortly before the news arrives of my resignation.

I am thoroughly determined to go back to private life. Too much time have I lost serving men who, as Voltaire said, do not deserve to be commanded. Very soon, my dear Wilson, will you see me up there.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ April 12. *Ibid.*, 347. On April 29, also, Bolívar authorized Vergara to discuss privately with the diplomatic representatives of the United States and Great Britain at Bogotá the possibility of their aid in saving the country from the menace of anarchy and dissolution. A similar request appears in a letter of the Liberator's secretary, July 6.

⁶⁶ May 19. *Ibid.*, 384.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 478.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 463-464.

All the republics of Spanish America have their national heroes of the Revolution—Nariño, Miranda, Bolívar, San Martín, O'Higgins, Sucre, Artigas, Hidalgo, Morelos, and Morazán—and to all of them the people of the United States accord the recognition due their consummate valor, patriotism, and service in the cause of liberty. But, in the eyes of the friends and well wishers of Spanish America in the sister republic of the north, none of the heroes ranks higher in the gifts and attainments that distinguish the soldier and statesman than Simón Bolívar. Known to Europeans and Americans of his own day, and admired by them, more than any of his great companions in the struggle for independence, he won an appreciation that has steadily gathered lustre through the advancing years.

Some Spanish Americans there are who assert that foreigners are incapable of understanding the Liberator and hence of doing him justice. Because critics beyond the pale find blemishes in his character and achievements is proof, it would seem, that they do not value him in the full measure of his worth. But had Bolívar ranked with the angels in all their impeccability, he would not have been the fallible mortal to love and respect that posterity chooses. It was his faults, indeed, that exalted his virtues. To admit them is to condone them in the name of the ideals of liberty to which he consecrated his life. Knowing what Bolívar's real sentiments toward the United States were, the people of this country, in common with their fellow Americans throughout the New World, will make their homage to his memory all the more grateful.

WILLIAM R. SHEPHERD.